Chapter Ten

Beyond rhetorical success: Advancing the potential for the community forestry programme in Nepal to address equity concerns

Bishnu Upreti

Abstract

The Community Forestry Programme in the hills of Nepal is transforming the way forest management is practised and is becoming institutionalised as progressive strategies, policies and legislation evolve. Community-based forest management has demonstrated appreciable success with respect to biophysical achievements. Despite these advances, it is not yet able to fully ensure equitable, gender-sensitive and poverty-focused outcomes. A major factor responsible for this inability is the lack of appropriate methods to effectively translate policies into practices. By examining characteristics and the applicability of social learning approaches to community-based forest management in Nepal, this chapter argues that social learning can fill this gap.

INTRODUCTION

Community forest management is increasingly recognised as a suitable approach to the sustainable management and utilisation of forest resources. This approach is

grounded in the philosophy of participation by users in management activities, which forms the basis of the current Community Forestry Programme of Nepal.

Despite the advances that have been made in government community forestry programmes in Nepal since the late 1970s, Nepal's experience to date does not go far enough in accounting for the complex social dynamics underlying community-based approaches to ensure equitable, gender sensitive and poverty-focused outcomes. This contention is supported by evidence from recent research. The level of participation of women on Forest Users' Committees (FUC) is only 19% per cent of the total membership (Shrestha 1997). A study of users' expectations from community forestry carried out in seven districts shows that women and the poor feel marginalized and lack information about users' rights to community forest resources (WATCH 1995). Evidence is emerging that the poorest and low caste people are beginning to withdraw from Forest User Groups (Pokharel and Tumbahamphe 1999). The second National Workshop for government forest officials, held in August 1999, explicitly concluded that current forest management is not addressing equity concerns (Kantipur Daily National Newspaper 1999). Appendix 1 illustrates some of the problems confronting poor and disadvantaged forest users. These shortcomings suggest a need for alternative approaches to bridge the gap between policy and practice. It is the thesis of this chapter that the achievement of the desired social outcomes requires a deeper understanding and appreciation of the ecological interdependence, social embeddedness, complexity and uncertainty (Röling 1997) that characterise the activities and discourse relating to community-based forest resources.

In community-based forestry, there are different types of resource users, having different economic and social status, perspectives, knowledge systems, values, understandings and objectives (Anderson *et al.* 1998). Their coping strategies and actions determine the success or failure of community-based forest management. Successful community-based forest management promotes equity and improved standards of living for users. A social learning approach that facilitates collective learning and collaborative action among the different users at group, community, regional and national levels has great potential to contribute towards this ultimate goal.

Social learning is an approach to collaborative learning and collective action that enables people to assess past events jointly, to modify their accustomed behaviour and to develop new forms of adaptive behaviour. It promotes interaction among stakeholders

who may have different interests, beliefs, values, knowledge systems, management styles and perspectives (Röling and Jiggins 1998; Upreti 1998; Wilson and Morren 1990) to construct shared knowledge, to agree to act, to actually act, and to monitor the effects of acting upon that knowledge (Röling 1992, 1994).

I use a case study from Dolakha District in the Middle Hills of Nepal to explore the opportunities for social learning and advancing social equity in community forest management in Nepal. The case highlights how community forests can be managed at the local level based on collective learning and adaptive action. The paper concludes that the current gap between the rhetoric and the reality of social equity in community forestry can be substantially reduced by systematically incorporating social learning into the sustainable management of community-based forest resources.

BACKGROUND TO COMMUNITY FORESTRY IN NEPAL

Nepal has been one of the pioneers in promoting community management of forests. Realizing the management abilities of local users, His Majesty's Government of Nepal in 1978 amended the Forest Act of 1961 to provide for the handover of degraded forest to *panchayats*[1]*,* in the form of *Panchayat* Forest and *Panchayat* Protected Forest. These forests were collectively termed 'community forest' (Tuladhar 1998). Over the next 20 years, forest policies, laws, regulations and operational guidelines were revised, the participation of users and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) was encouraged and donors changed their funding priorities. In 1989, the Master Plan for the Forestry Sector gave top priority to the community and private forestry programmes and prescribed a legal and organisational framework for increasing the participation of local communities. This plan was supported by the Forest Act of 1993 and the Forest Regulations of 1995 (Belbase and Regmi 1998), as well as by the Forestry Sector Coordination Committee created at the central level. The policy guidelines focus on decentralisation, participation of local people in decision making, meeting basic needs, utilising forest resources sustainably and encouraging gender equity and social peace (NSCFP 1997). The resulting Community Forestry Programme explicitly recognises social equity and poverty alleviation as fundamental objectives. However, the translation of policies into practices that address these issues remains weak. Table 10.1 summarises the current status of the Community Forestry Programme in Nepal, based on detailed reviews by academics and NGOs working in the country.

191

Table 10.1 Overview of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges of community forestry in Nepal

Strengths	Weaknesses
• Awareness raised and experiences gained • User's access to forest resources increased • Conflict management skills developed • Emerging and recognised local institutions and platforms • Women's workload reduced • Natural regeneration increased • Forest fire incidences decreased • Leadership at grassroots developed • Feeling of ownership increased • Private planting practices increased • Decentralisation started • Community forest area increased • Accountability of users increased • Deforestation rate in hills decreased	• Social equity issues are in question (gap between policy and practice) • Focus on quantitative targets • Elite domination of Forest Users' Groups (FUGs) • Increasing gap between rich and poor • Authority to grant or revoke community forest status lies with bureaucracy • Lack of transparency • Donor-driven • Lack of representation of disadvantaged groups of people in the planning process • Difficult to scale up from hills to Terai • Lack of technical knowledge among FUGs • Protection oriented approach • Weak post-formation support to FUGs • Insufficient and contradictory policies • Lack of political commitment • Autocratic bureaucrats
Opportunities	**Challenges**
• Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal • Democratic government • Donor's interest/support • Users' interests • Progressive policies, laws, acts and regulations • Global concern and interest	• Globalisation and privatisation • Bureaucratic resistance • Timber Corporation of Nepal has sole rights to harvest the timber of 33 districts • Resistance to change • Vested interests of powerful stakeholders • Corruption and corruption network

Sources: Shrestha 1999; Poudel 1997; Shrestha *et al.* 1995; Sinha *et al.* 1996; Poudel *et al.* 1998; Shrestha 1997a, 1997b; Balbase and Regmi 1998; Joshi 1997; and author's observations.

Figure 10.1 Community managed forests: hope for future

# LEARNING FROM COMMUNITY FORESTRY IN THE CENTRAL HILLS OF NEPAL

Methodology

Information for the case presented here was developed through focus group discussions, life histories, secondary data, informal discussions, researcher observation and semistructured and key informant interviews[2].

Study area

Figure 10.2 depicts the case study areas. Dolakha district is situated in the mountain belt, 160 km northeast of Kathmandu. Geographically, it ranges from 763 m to 7183 m asl with a total area of 2143 km^2. Within this area, 94 400 ha are covered by forest. The total population of the district is 173 836 (NSCFP 1998). The prevalence of indigenous forest management is a unique feature of this district. The Community Forestry Programme is one of the major development projects in Dolakha district.

193

Khahare-Katunje forest, with an area of approximately 800 ha, is situated in the Pawoti Village Development Committee area in the belt of the Tamakosi River. It has been the major forest system used by more than 650 households in this area for 700 years. Matarkopakho is a fragmented section of this larger forest system and comprises about 50 ha now used by about 50 households. It is a uniquely managed forest in this area and illustrates how local people learned to respond to changing situations and to adapt their management system for a better future.

Figure 10.2 Location of the research area
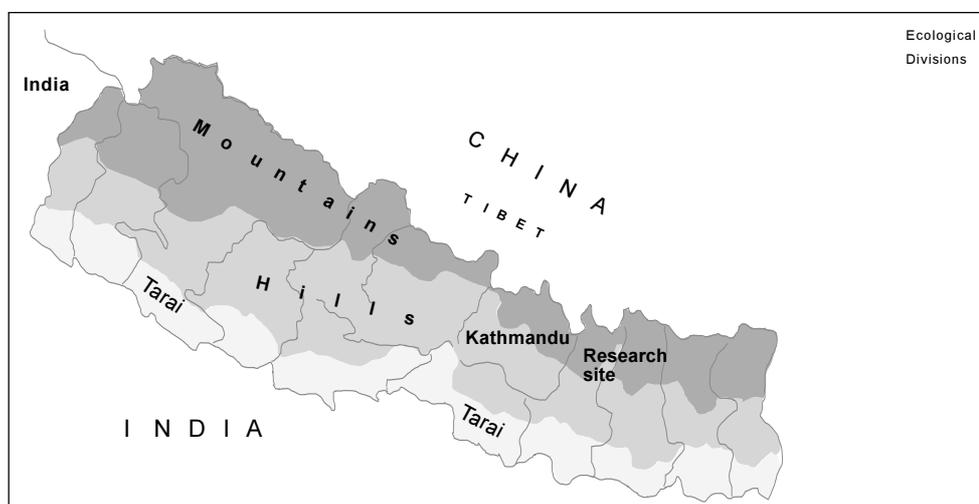
The development of local management initiatives

In about 1910 a powerful landlord encroached for the first time on the dense natural forest of Matarkopakho. The following year, due to a bad dream[3], the landlord left the land and it came under community ownership. Thereafter, Matarkopakho was used mainly for grazing, collection of fodder, alignment for public irrigation canals and worshipping. In the late 1960s, Matarkopakho was encroached upon again, this time by a powerful politician and *Mukhiya*[4]. The users decided to protest the invasion. Without critically assessing the risks and possible negative impacts, they filed a case with the mobile judge *(Badahakim)* against the invasion. Due to unfavourable power relations, they suspected that the forthcoming decision would most likely be in the landlord's favour. That was the turning point for users to seek informal negotiation.

194

The invader began cropping the land and reacted negatively toward the protesters, causing the conflict to escalate. The protesters faced severe fodder and grazing problems for more than two years. Then they began to search for other alternatives. They discussed the severity of the problem, analysed the situation, reviewed their past approach to protection and finally in 1968 formed a Protection Committee to negotiate the conflict. The committee discussed the issue with the local community. It mobilised parents and other relatives of the invader, the religious leader (*purohit*) and social workers to exert strong social pressure, rather than proceeding further with legal action. The family of the invader welcomed negotiation as a way of maintaining relations with the larger community. Ultimately, the conflict was resolved through informal negotiation. The facilitation role of elderly people as opinion leaders was crucial in bringing the conflicting parties into negotiation. In this process, all users had to think, rethink, express opinions, share their ideas and develop common understandings and reoriented action plans. The Protection Committee called periodic meetings of all forest users, including women and poor villagers, to review their activities and draw lessons for further improvement. Users provided feedback to the committee to improve action processes. In this way they learned from their mistakes. The emergence of a self-facilitation process is a unique characteristic of this case.

Following successful negotiation, the villagers sought collaboration with agencies to regenerate the forest to assure the fulfilment of their future forest needs. In 1984, the Swiss-funded Integrated Hill Development Project (IHDP) agreed to support their initiatives. In addition, the *Panchayat* (village council) provided legal and organisational support to the collaborative venture to develop and manage this forest area. Following the IHDP, an NGO known as the Environment and Population Awareness Program (ENAP) supported the villagers in implementing community development activities.

Subsequently, in 1990 the Protection Committee was reorganised into the Matarkopakho Forest Conservation Committee[5]. Committee members were selected through a mass meeting of the users to represent women, disadvantaged and poor people and social workers. The elders and the elected head of the Village Development Committee were nominated by consensus as advisors. With the support of ENAP, the Forest Conservation Committee participated in training activities, meetings and discussions organised at district headquarters and elsewhere and gained knowledge and experience on resource management approaches and participatory planning processes (Figure 10.3). Committee members observed the effective income

generation and community development activities carried out by other groups and organisations. Learning from these cases, they decided to begin resource utilisation and management activities such as provision of community drinking water, non-formal education, post-harvest processing, kitchen gardening and other income generating activities. Continued monitoring of progress by both committee members and users, combined with joint review and reflection, helped them to achieve success. By this learning and action process people demonstrated their management abilities and learning capacities.

Figure 10.3 Community members are planning a community forestry activity

Presently, the Forest Conservation Committee is sharing information regularly with other Forest User Groups, government and non-governmental organisations and communities. Participatory diagnosis of problems is a strong element of their management style. Grazing, for example, became a serious problem when the practice was prohibited to protect the planted forest. Poor people especially suffered from such protection measures. To overcome the problem, the committee opened a few sections of forest at a time for rotational grazing. Linkages were established with other stakeholders to help manage and monitor the plan. Rules and regulations were implemented, refined, re-refined and amended by the users themselves and executed, thereby enhancing the adaptive nature of learning and action.

During the period between 1984 and 1999, the Matarkopakho Forest Conservation Committee, in collaboration with other stakeholders, used this adaptive approach to develop innovative practices. These practices included alternate fodder harvesting, thatch grass management, green manuring, and harvesting of minor forest products. In the later years, the committee initiated action research on some high value non-timber forest products (NTFPs). Organised rotational surveillance of the forest by members of the committee ensured the prevention of illegal activities.

This forest management approach contains several elements of social learning and is an example of adaptive community-based management grounded in local initiatives. Women are members of the Forest Conservation Committee and participate in training, meetings and decision making (ENAP 1998). Gender roles in the community are changing and gender sensitivity has increased. The forest has become a symbol of cultural and social change in this remote hill area. Learning from this approach, the people of neighbouring areas also planted forest on barren public lands. Fifteen ha of barren public land known as Masanedanda and 20 ha of barren public land known as Rukhinikopakho are now also being converted into dense forest. In many cases, ENAP strategically facilitated the awareness-raising process to develop the capacity of users to conserve their forest.

Analysis and reflection

Evidence from the case study suggests that gender and other equity concerns may be substantially addressed by incorporating measures such as the following into management systems: 1) facilitation of planning processes to include potentially marginalised people in decision making from the very beginning; 2) the use of Protection Committees as an institution to negotiate informally on behalf of the community; 3) representation of the poor, women and other disadvantaged groups in Forest User Groups and ensuring that they are informed about their roles, responsibilities and authority regarding community forest resources; 4) assessment of the fairness and efficiency with which forest resources are distributed (Figure 10.4).

The case reflects conditions similar to those analysed by Maarleveld and Dangbégnon (1998), in which learning through experience, observation and interaction within particular social contexts over time results in the creation of recognisable social platforms

Figure 10.4 Women are the principal user of forest. Therefore their involvement is utmost essential

for collaborative action. Social learning as a methodological approach provides alternative ways of gaining insights into and predicting actions that affect community-based forest management. This section aims to demonstrate how social learning can help fill the gap between the rhetoric and the reality of the Community Forestry Programme.

Collective learning and collaborative action

Collective learning promotes collaborative action. Characteristics observed in the case that enhance learning and thus collaboration include the following: 1) the willingness of the actors to cooperate; 2) the positive influence of local power elites such as elders or priests; 3) effective communication among the actors; 4) the practical significance to the community of the issues under consideration; 5) the participation of skilled facilitators; and 6) complementarity in the roles of supporting organisations.

The case shows that collective learning enhances community-based forest management. Such learning is not limited to scientific-academic knowledge, but occurs principally

among the actors and involves both 'finding out' and 'taking action'. The case also demonstrated that collective learning is a reflective process of adjusting to the changing circumstances in which people come to perceive, interpret and act upon their interests. Stakeholders learned by action and experience and developed new ways of thinking.

Equitable access of disadvantaged groups of people to forest resources and their influence in policy formulation can be increased through facilitated social learning. This process brings people of different status and cultures together on a common platform to negotiate issues of access and, ultimately, to decrease the elites' domination of decision making in the Forest User Group. This process also creates awareness among the users themselves of their rights and responsibilities with respect to community forest resources. Through facilitation of effective communication, organised monitoring, collective learning and collaborative action, the existing mechanisms of 'equal' benefit sharing can be changed to address the needs of those who are totally dependent on forest resources for their survival and are too poor to pay access fees.

Effective facilitation of the four phases[6] of the Forestry Programme should ensure sensitive and equitable processes, not necessarily just neutral or 'equal' ones. To achieve better equity for the poor, community-based forest management may require trade-offs (Grimble *et al.* 1995). The process of making trade-offs is itself a politically sensitive process that requires an inductive approach (Gunderson *et al.* 1995; Lee 1993) to bring observation and experience together in understanding the responses of different stakeholders.

Ownership and accountability are other important variables for collaborative learning and action. Imposed participation and lack of involvement of all users in decision making cannot generate feelings of ownership and accountability. Community-based forest management can only succeed when all users participate in the decision-making process (Shrestha 1997a), as is demonstrated in the case study. Democratic decision-making processes help to develop feelings of trust, ownership and self-confidence. Unless disadvantaged groups of people develop the confidence to assert their rights to forest resources, powerful members of user groups dominate the whole process, which then becomes feudalistic (Sinha *et al.* 1996). The appropriate way to break such an impasse is to develop common understanding and agreement through effective communication among the actors.

Similarly values, beliefs and trust also affect learning. The values associated with the vertical social stratification created by the Hindu caste system in Nepal exert enormous influence on community forestry and inhibit sensitivity to issues of social equity. In the case, a long-term interactive process and facilitation support helped to raise awareness and weaken the intensity of cultural resistance. In this particular case, collaborative work was enabled by feelings of trust, group identity and positive intention that occurred among the individual stakeholders despite caste differences.

The case demonstrates double loop learning, through which people reflect on and amend not only their actions, but also their action strategies. Double loop learning requires valid information, free and informed choice and internal commitment (Hamilton 1998). In the case study, stakeholders obtained valid information through their actions and made informed choices to adapt. People also, over time, learned to learn, which might be considered 'triple loop learning'.

Information and communication

Understanding the generation, transformation and use of knowledge helps to facilitate collective learning and joint action. Institutionalisation of feedback and communication mechanisms and rewards for learning by doing (Lee 1993) increases the effectiveness of multistakeholder forest management. A lesson from the case is not to control information flows, but to monitor, adapt and learn continuously through ongoing information exchange and trust building (Gilmour and Fisher 1997).

In the Matarkopakho case, action research (for example rotational grazing) generated knowledge and information which served as a basic starting point for planning and adaptation of further collaborative activities. Valid and reliable information is important for decision making. The communication strategies used in the case were effective in establishing a platform for bringing multiple stakeholders into the decision-making process.

Platforms for negotiation

The dependence of a group of people on a resource is a condition upon which common platforms for resource use negotiation can be created. Such platforms provide crucial opportunities to work together in agreeing on joint action plans and collective

implementation. The Matarkopakho Forest Conservation Committee is a concrete example of such a platform. The functioning of a platform is governed by content, power structure, local context and the culture of a society. Platforms, as places for social learning, help to develop networks between individuals and institutions for collaborative action. The case shows that social networking can be a powerful way of achieving common objectives, especially when actors are united by a common problem and a common culture. The creation of social networks through facilitation promotes shared commitment (Ramirez 1999) and helps to develop institutional capacity for collaborative action, without which community-based management is difficult to achieve (Gilmour and Fisher 1997).

Monitoring and adaptation

Monitoring frameworks in adaptive forest management help participants to learn from the ongoing process and to adapt as needed. In this case, monitoring played a significant role in improving the management process. For example, the size of fragments allocated for grazing in the dry season was increased after the committee realised the excessive pressure of animals on forest land. An effectively organised monitoring system is essential to tracking representation and equitable benefits distribution for poor and disadvantaged people.

Facilitation

Facilitation can improve the performance of the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of any development interventions (Engel 1995). Facilitation focuses on the process of making things visible, and it was crucial in the case in orienting awareness and activities toward social equity concerns. Facilitation minimises later conflict by ensuring that planning processes are effective in identifying real users, their roles, commitments, and authority over forest resources.

One of the main challenges in community forestry is to create mechanisms and procedures to involve disadvantaged groups of people in decision making and to minimise the influence of the powerful elite. Facilitation can help to meet this challenge through awareness raising as a non-coercive means for change. Such change, however, does not happen immediately; continuous efforts are essential to promote effective, efficient and expandable social learning (Korten 1984). In the study case, for example, gender

sensitisation was an external concept that was contradictory to the customary norms for the majority of users (Upreti 1995). Even so, the case shows evidence that women are gradually emerging as active members in forest management and other development activities and are participating in meetings, discussions and learning processes, mainly because of coordinated facilitation. Facilitation need not always be from outside. It can emerge from within the communities, whose insights and adaptive skills of resource use are derived from many years of experience and cultural traditions that have co-evolved with local circumstnces.

LESSONS LEARNED AND IMPLICATIONS FOR COMMUNITY FORESTRY IN NEPAL

The availability of progressive acts and regulations is a necessary but not a sufficient condition to ensure community forestry's responsiveness towards social equity issues. The case study in this paper shows that the internal social structure and disposition of power to manipulate acts and regulations, local knowledge systems, the donor's role and procedures and institutional arrangements all play influential roles as well. They also demonstrate that a social learning approach supports institution building and can make positive impacts on the Community Forestry Programme in Nepal.

The case showed that local people are capable of making sound judgements in managing the forest resources available in their communities. Therefore, community-based forest management should be built primarily upon their abilities. However, it is essential to develop the capacity of local people and their institutions (such as the Matarkopakho Forest Conservation Committee) through awareness-raising activities and support. The case showed that conflict and negotiation are integral parts of the community management process. Conflict is not always dysfunctional, as it can lead to innovation and therefore has great transformational potential. It is essential to create favourable structural mechanisms, such as the involvement of poor, disadvantaged people and women in planning and decision-making processes to ensure their proper representation and to realise their authority, responsibility and accountability in community forestry. Such a mechanism can be found in a sound learning process. In particular, facilitation and platform establishment encourage the involvement of marginal groups.

The innovative and successful approaches and methodologies developed by individual projects and institutions need to be shared with other organisations working in community-based resource management. Institutionalised forums are essential to share and 'scale up' such experiences. Otherwise, there is a risk of creating an island effect, with large disparities between districts where community management projects have been implemented and districts without such projects.

CONCLUSIONS

This paper has highlighted that the implementation of Nepal's Community Forestry Programme has not adequately addressed social equity concerns, but that the situation may be improved by incorporating social learning activities into the programme. Collective learning and collaborative action can lead to greater transparency about equity concerns and help mobilize less powerful stakeholders. Platforms for communication and negotiation play crucial roles in promoting these processes of learning and action. From the case study, it is clear that other aspects of social learning that are key to making the Community Forestry Programme successful are: the needs and the willingness of stakeholders to learn effective facilitation, regular monitoring, sharing of valid knowledge and information, effective feedback and feelings of ownership and trust among the actors. The Nepalese community forestry policy is progressive and comprehensive in comparison to the policies of other development programmes. However, their translation into practice, especially in addressing social equity concerns, could be stronger. If we learn from our experiences and respond appropriately, we will be that much closer to achieving the goals of the policy.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ENDNOTES

[1] *Panchayat* is a local governing body. After the restoration of democracy in 1990, the name '*panchayat*' was replaced by 'Village Development Committee' (VDC), the smallest political unit.

[2] In this research, I have a dual role: as an independent researcher, and, as a resident and forest user of one of the districts in which the project is being implemented, as a beneficiary of the project.

[3] A white cow kicked his faced in the dream. According to local legend, when a cow kicks the face of a person in a dream something bad will happen. To prevent such misfortune, part of the land should be kept for cows to graze on.

[4] A local land tax collector appointed by the Land Revenue Office. Only a few powerful people who have good relations with the government have this position.

[5] In Dolakha district, forest protection committees are common management structures created to develop and conserve forest not formally handed over by the government to users (NSCFP 1997: 10).

[6] The Community Forestry Program identifies four phases: investigation, negotiation, implementation and review.

LITERATURE CITED

Anderson, J., Clement, J. and Crowder, L. V. 1998 Accommodating conflicting interests in forestry: concepts emerging from pluralism. Unasylva 194 (49):3–10.

Belbase N. and Regmi, D. C. 1998 Comparative analysis of decentralization and (community) forestry legislation. International Center for Integrated Mountain Development, Kathmandu.

ENAP 1998 Annual report 1997–98. Charikot, Nepal. (Nepali version)

Engel, P. G. H. 1995 Facilitating innovation: an action-oriented approach and participatory methodology to improve innovative social practice in agriculture. Ph.D. Dissertation. Wageningen Agricultural University, Wageningen, The Netherlands.

Gilmour, D. and Fisher, B. 1997 A project or process. *In:* G. Borrini-Feyerabend (ed*.)* Beyond fences: seeking social sustainability in conservation, 103–106. IUCN, Gland, Switzerland.

Grimble, R., Chan, M,K. Aglionby, J. and Quan, J. 1995 Trees and trade-offs: a stakeholder approach to natural resource management. Gatekeeper Series #52. International Institute for Environment and Development, U.K.

Gunderson, L.H. Holling, C. S. and Light, S.S. (eds.) 1995 Barriers and bridges to the renewal of ecosystems and institutions, 428–460. Columbia Press, New York.

Hamilton, G. 1998 Co-learning tools: powerful instruments of change in South Queensland, Australia. *In:* Röling, N. and Wagemakers, A. (eds.) Facilitating sustainable agriculture. Participatory learning and adaptive management in times of environmental uncertainty, 172–188. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK.

His Majesty's Government of Nepal 1989 Master Plan for the Forestry Sector. Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation, Kathmandu.

Kandel, P. N. 1999 Development of community forest: diminishing livestock. Sahabhagita 12: 2055. (Nepali version)

Kantipur Daily National Newspaper 1999. 4 August.

Korten, D.C. 1984 Rural development programming: the learning process approach. *In:* Korten, D.C. and Klauss, R. (eds.) People-centred development: contributions toward theory and planning frameworks, 176–188. Kumarian Press, West Hartford, Connecticut, USA.

Joshi, A. L. 1997 Community forestry evolution, concept and policy. International Training Course (15 Sept.–5 Oct. 1997). Participatory Process, Tools and Techniques in Community Forestry Field Tested Innovations. Regional Community Forestry Training Center/HMG Nepal, Kathmandu.

Lee, K. N. 1993 Compass and gyroscope: integrating science and politics for the environment. Island Press, Washington, D.C.

Maarleveld, M., and Dangbégnon, C. 1998 Managing natural resources in face of evolving conditions: a social learning perspective. Paper presented at the seventh conference of the International Association for the Study of Common Property, 10–14 June, 1998. Vancouver, Canada.

Nepal-Swiss Community Forestry Project (NSCFP) 1997 Nepal-Swiss Community Forestry Project Document Phase III July 1996–June 2000. HMG/N and Swiss Development Corporation, Kathmandu.

Nepal Swiss Community Forestry Project 1998 Nepal-Swiss Community Forestry Project Annual Report 1998. HMG/N and Swiss Development Corporation, Kathmandu.

Poudel, B. R., Siktel, K. P. and Bhattarai, U. R.. 1998 Proceedings of the community forestry strategy development workshop. Action Aid Nepal, Kathmandu.

Poudel, D. 1997 Impact assessment of Nepal-Swiss Community Forestry Project NSCFP, Kathmandu.

Pokharel B. and Tumbahamphe, N. 1999 Community forestry development action: a synthesis of NUKCFP reports and publications. Nepal-UK Community Forestry Project, Kathmandu.

Ramirez, R. 1999. Stakeholder analysis and conflict management. *In*: Buckles, D. (ed.) Conflict and collaboration in natural resource management, 101–126. IDRC/World Bank, Ottawa, Canada, Washington, USA.

Röling, N. 1992 The emergence of knowledge systems thinking: a changing perception of relationships among innovation, knowledge process and configuration. Knowledge and Policy: The International Journal of Knowledge Transfer and Utilisation Spring 5(1): 42–64.

Röling, N. 1994 Creating human platforms to manage natural resources: first results of research program. *In:* Proceedings of the International Symposium on Systems Oriented Research in Agriculture and Development, 391–395. Montpellier, France.

Röling, N. 1997 The soft side of land: socio-economic sustainability of land use systems. Paper presented at the conference on Geo-Information for Sustainable Land

Management. Enschede 17–21 Aug. 1997. International Institute for Aerospace Survey and Earth Science (ITC), The Netherlands.

Röling, N. and Jiggins, J. 1998 The ecological knowledge system. *In:* Röling, N. and Wagemakers, A. (eds.) Facilitating sustainable agriculture. Participatory learning and adaptive management in times of environmental uncertainty, 283–311. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK.

Shrestha, N. K. 1999 Community forest in danger in Nepal. Forest, Trees and People Newsletter 38, March. Food and Agriculture Organization and University of Agricultural Sciences, Sweden, Uppsala.

Shrestha, K. B. 1997a Community forestry: policy, legislation and issues. First national workshop on community forestry and rural development: potential role of I/NGOs. 24–26 July, 1997. Godawori, Lalitpur, p. 9–16.

Shrestha, K. B. 1997b Policy implementation lecture notes. International training course: Participatory process, tools and techniques in community forestry field-tested innovations. 15 Sept.–5 Oct., 1997. Regional Community Forestry Training Center/ HMG/Nepal, Kathmandu.

Shrestha, M. L., Joshi, S. P., Bhuju, U. R., Joshi, D. B. and Gautam, M. 1995 Community forestry manual. DANIDA and International Center for Integrated Mountain Development, Kathmandu.

Sinha S., Shrestha, N. K., Kuechli, C. and Shrestha, M. L. 1996 Of trees, careers and capacity development: evaluation of the Dolakha Ramechhap Community Forestry Development Project. HMG/N and Swiss Development Corporation. Kathmandu.

Tuladhar, B. R. 1998 Community forestry in integrated participatory watershed management. Paper presented in People and Resources Dynamics Project workshop. March, 1998, Almora.

Upreti, B. R. 1998 Searching for an alternate approach for community level natural resource management in Nepal: a case study on natural resource use negotiation— a knowledge systems perspective. M.Sc. thesis submitted to the Wageningen Agricultural University, The Netherlands.

Upreti, B. R. 1995 Women's participation in development activities: a case study of Mechi Hill Development Progr am in Ilam District. M.A. Thesis submitted to the Department of Sociology/Anthropology, Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu, Nepal.

Wilson, K. and Morren, G. E. B. 1990 Systems approaches for improvement in agriculture and resource management. Macmillan Publishing Company, New York.

WATCH 1995 Developing an understanding on users' expectations from community forestry. Nepal-UK Community Forestry Project, Kathmandu.

APPENDIX 1. EVIDENCE OF THE NEED FOR ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES FOR ADDRESSING SOCIAL EQUITY CONCERNS IN COMMUNITY FORESTRY

Example 1. Female-headed households In one village, there was a poor, female-headed household that depended on goat keeping for its livelihood. The woman of the household obtained all necessary goat fodder from the nearby forest. After control of the forest was handed to the local community, the Forest User Group decided to close the forest to all access for some years. Eventually, the woman could not obtain enough fodder for her goats and her enterprise collapsed, thus threatening her livelihood. (Source: Poudel *et al*. 1998: 10).

Example 2. Community forestry jeopardizes livestock in Humla In 1995, Forest User Groups in neighboring districts decided to block the pathway for the sheep of the Humli people via their community forest area. Sheep are the main source of transportation for goods and materials in Karnali Zone. To protest the decision of these Forest User Groups, Humli people appealed to the district court and obtained an order to open the pathway for sheep. The Forest User Groups did not respect the court's decision. Representatives of all political parties and people of Humla then came to Kathmandu to register complaints with the Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation. The ministry did not take the problem seriously and ultimately, Humli people stopped their sheep farming. Presently the population of sheep in Humli is rapidly decreasing and the livelihood of many sheep farmers is threatened. (Source: Kandel 1999: 16–19).

Example 3. Poor people are marginalised Some of the poorest *Mushahar* families are unable to thatch their small houses due to the lack of thatching materials (*thakal/khar*), since the Forest User Groups who control the forest are protection-oriented and do not allow the collection of thatching materials. (Source: Poudel *et al.* 1998: 10).

Example 4. Forest resources are exploited by the elite In Suspa, 558 ha of dense forest have been managed by a Forest User Group for 6 years. This year, a few members extracted personal profit from the forest. They drew up a plan for selling timber and secured approval from the forest users' committee. Then they sold

wood for 2 million Nepalese rupees (about US$29 400 at an exchange rate of 68 rupees=US$1) to traders from Kathmandu. At the same time, they drew up legal documents for expenditures of that amount, so that the total expenditure was shown equal to the total income. In this way money was misused by a few people at the cost of other users. (Source: primary data collected from informal discussion).

Social Learning
in Community Forests

Edited by

Eva Wollenberg
David Edmunds
Louise Buck
Jeff Fox
Sonja Brodt

A Joint Publication of
CIFOR and the East-West Center
2001